



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

**November 16, 2006
For immediate release**

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MANURE SPILLS ARE A GOOD REMINDER TO SLOW DOWN, CHECK CONNECTIONS

DES MOINES -- A rash of manure spills and a few fish kills should be a reminder for people who are land applying manure to slow down a little and check the connections on their systems.

“From eastern Iowa to the northwest, we’ve had a larger than usual number of spills caused by leaks or ruptures from umbilical systems,” said Jeff Prier, coordinator of the DNR’s manure applicator certification program.

Umbilical systems use a long, pressurized hose to carry liquid manure from a source to the crop field where it is land applied as a nutrient source.

Prier added that the DNR has been called out on a number of spills caused by a tanker or tractor overturning as it turned from the road into a crop field.

“Sometimes just slowing down a little can save time and effort in the long run,” he said. “Even more important, routine maintenance during the season will provide better protection for water quality in our streams and lakes. Tanks and umbilical systems take substantial abuse throughout the application season.”

Report spills to the DNR within six hours of when they occur or are discovered. Prier said that the sooner the spill is called in, the more likely that the DNR can offer technical assistance that will minimize damage to the environment.

Manure applicators should call the 24-hour emergency spill line at (515) 281-8694 to report a spill.

Media Contact: Jeff Prier, (712) 262-4177, at the Spencer DNR field office.

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EVERYONE WHO HANDLES MANURE NEEDS TO BE CERTIFIED

DES MOINES – Commercial and confinement site manure applicators need to be certified. Period. End of discussion.

As crops have been harvested in northern Iowa, the manure applicators have been out in force, land applying hog, cattle and poultry manure to provide nutrients for next year's crops.

Consequently DNR inspectors have found a number of applicators who should be certified, but are not, according to Jeff Prier, coordinator of the DNR's manure applicator certification program.

Prier has personally found eight uncertified applicators during the last week. Among them were several people applying poultry manure sold under Section 200A of state law and confinement site applicators who were not being properly supervised by a certified applicator.

"There is a reason for certification being required by state law," said Prier. "That reason is to make sure that every applicator knows how to respond to an emergency situation and that they are knowledgeable about the state laws governing manure application.

"Since the law passed in 1999, we've seen a definite improvement in the applicators' response to spills and general understanding of application standards," he added. "That translates into fewer or less serious threats to Iowa's water quality."

Prier said uncertified applicators can contact their local Extension office to take training that will lead to certification. They will have to pay an education fee and a certification fee.

Certification is required for all commercial manure applicators and confinement site manure applicators who apply, transport, handle or store manure.

There are very few exemptions from certification. However, the following people are exempt:

- Confinement site applicators applying manure from a facility with 500 animal units or less (1,250 finishing hogs, 500 feeder cattle, 357 dairy cattle, 27,777 turkeys or 50,000 chickens.
- Those commercial applicators applying manure under the direct supervision of a certified commercial applicator during the first 30 days on the job, and
- Part-time employees or family members under the direct supervision of a certified confinement site applicator.

Prier added that the supervisor must be physically present at the manure application site and be capable of immediate communication with the supervised person.

Media Contact: Jeff Prier, (712) 262-4177, at the Spencer DNR field office.

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PUBLIC ASKED TO ATTEND MEETING ON IMPROVING THE NORTH FORK MAQUOKETA RIVER

DES MOINES – The DNR needs your input on a draft plan to improve water quality in the North Fork Maquoketa River.

The DNR will hold a public meeting to gather Iowans' input at 7 p.m. Dec. 4 at the New Vienna Mutual Insurance Building, located at 7218 Columbus St. in New Vienna.

The North Fork Maquoketa River is on the state's impaired waters list due to sedimentation, nutrients and ammonia levels that adversely impact aquatic life in the stream. The river's designated use is for maintaining aquatic life, like fish, but long-term monitoring has indicated lower than expected aquatic life diversity and population in the river.

The DNR has developed a draft water quality improvement plan, also known as a TMDL, or Total Maximum Daily Load, for the river. TMDLs are calculations used to determine how much of a pollutant a water body can receive and still meet water quality standards. The water quality improvement plan includes information on how conservation efforts in the watershed can improve water quality.

Iowans unable to attend the meeting can submit comments on the draft plan until Dec. 18 via e-mail, phone or mail:

Internet: www.iowadnr.gov/water/watershed/tmdl/publicnotice.html

E-mail: chris.vangorp@dnr.state.ia.us

Telephone: Chris Van Gorp at (515) 281-4791

Mail: Chris Van Gorp, care of Iowa DNR, Wallace State Office Building, 502 E. 9th St., Des Moines, Iowa 50319

After receiving public comments, the DNR will forward the draft plan to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for final approval.

For more information, contact Chris Van Gorp at (515) 281-4791.